

## **Use of Chemicals in Forestry by Coillte**

Trees are normally the biggest plant in the woods. Therefore, once they have started to grow the use of chemicals is not necessary as other weeds cannot affect their health. However, very young trees sometimes need protection while they are small to prevent attack from insect species or being outgrown by weedy plants. In many cases, if left unprotected, large amounts of young trees would be killed by insect damage.

As a result Coillte use chemicals in our woodlands to protect young trees but the amount of chemicals used in forestry is very low and would represent only a small fraction of the amounts used in other sectors. For example, data from an EPA report shows that the amount of herbicide used in forestry in a year is less than 0.07% of the total used in Irish agriculture on arable crops alone. Even though the amounts we use in Coillte are low we are committed to reducing our use of chemicals even further.

At Coillte, we use an integrated pest management system to monitor our forests. This allows us first to determine if any chemical use at all is needed, and often in many cases, our forest managers determine the trees do not require any further assistance, resulting in our chemical use significantly decreasing over recent years. In addition, we also use manual methods for vegetation control in our forests where possible.

Coillte only use chemicals which are fully approved as safe to use in forestry in Ireland by the Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Registration and Control Division.

When necessary we use chemicals in forestry; a herbicide, glyphosate to control invasive species and other weeds and the insecticides acetamiprid and coragen. These insecticides are applied only after an examination of the forest shows that the number of insect pests present are high enough to cause significant damage to the young trees; if not no insecticide is applied. Insecticides are applied only at the establishment phase of the forest cycle.

All of Coillte's operators are fully trained in health and safety and environmental aspects of the use of chemicals. We erect notices to inform the public where the chemicals have been sprayed. The chemicals are always applied carefully by hand directly to the base of trees and away from watercourses and other sensitive natural features.

Occasionally, chemicals are used on our lands to control invasive alien plant species, such as Rhododendron. Best practice guidelines have determined that without safe chemical application it is virtually impossible to control the spread of these species. These plants are cut manually and chemicals are applied directly to the cut stump where it is taken up directly into the plant.

Coillte's overall forest management is dual certified by both the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®)<sup>1</sup> ([www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)) and the Programme for Endorsing Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) and our health and safety management system is certified to the ISO 45001 standard.

If you would like to find out more about Coillte's regional forest operations, you can sign up as a stakeholder and receive regular news updates and information, at this link

<https://www.coillte.ie/about-us/social-responsibility/consultation/>

As part of our Chemical Use Policy all necessary ESRA's (Environmental and Social Risk Assessment) have been produced, copies of which can be made available if requested to [info@coillte.ie](mailto:info@coillte.ie)

<sup>1</sup>FSC licenced code FSC- C005714